

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **OPEN DOORS TO FEDERAL COURTS PROGRAM**

March 20, 2007

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida's five court divisions (Ft. Myers, Ocala, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Tampa) have each invited a class of high school seniors to participate as jurors in a mock criminal trial proceeding during the months of March and April. Part of a nationwide civics program called "Open Doors to Federal Courts" sponsored by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the mock trial will support the theme of this year's Open Doors to Federal Court program which is, *Partners in Justice: An Independent Judiciary and a Fair-Minded Jury*. The program centers on a fictional high school house party, a search, and the resulting criminal case. It is based on the Supreme Court's 2006 "knock and announce decision," *Hudson v. Michigan*. In the courtroom simulation, the host judge applies the law and the student jury tries the facts to demonstrate their vital partnership in the judicial process. The program also allows students to see and experience the different responsibilities of judges, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, and the importance of each role.

The mock trials will be held in Ft. Myers on March 23, 2007, Orlando on March 29, 2007, Ocala on March 30, 2007, Jacksonville on April 18, 2007, and in Tampa on April 19, 2007. The press is invited to attend this event at any of the following locations:

U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building  
2110 First St.  
Ft. Myers, FL 33601

U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building  
80 N. Hughey Ave.  
Orlando, FL 32801

U.S. Courthouse  
300 N. Hogan St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Sam M. Gibbons U.S. Courthouse  
801 N. Florida Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33602

Golden-Collum Memorial Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse  
207 N.W. Second St.  
Ocala, FL 34475

Press credentials must be presented to the U.S. Marshal upon arrival. Do not bring cell phones, beepers,

lap tops, pocket knives or weapons of any kind as you will not be permitted to bring them into the building. Due to the large number of participants expected, advance notice of your intention to attend must be provided as noted below.

**If you are interested in attending this event, please contact the Division Managers below to RSVP and obtain additional information.**

**Leslie Stoddard, Ft. Myers 239-461-2002**

**Drew Heathcoat, Jacksonville 904-549-1313**

**Marsha Fox, Tampa 813-301-5470**

**Laura Barsamian, Orlando 407-835-4201**

**Jim Leanhart, Ocala 352-369-7402**